

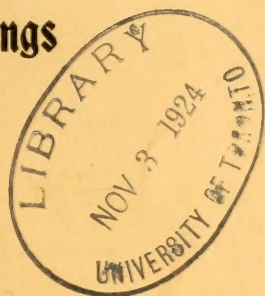
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Imperial Federation League

OF AUSTRALIA.

Addresses and Proceedings
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Australia's Preparation ➤

➤ **for Imperial Federation**

... BY ...
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Imperial Federation League

OF AUSTRALIA.

OBJECTS OF THE LEAGUE :

Rule 2.—The object of the League shall be the maintenance of a United Empire, and the development of constructive principles, securing the permanent co-operation of the United Kingdom and all the Dominions. Towards this end the League shall hold meetings, and its proceedings and addresses may be published. The League being non-partisan, members shall be permitted the utmost freedom in all discussions, and the League shall not be responsible for the opinions of individual members.

AUSTRALIA'S PREPARATION FOR IMPERIAL FEDERATION.

In aiming at the great object of Imperial Federation, we are impressed with the magnitude, the difficulty, and the complexity of the problem.

We have first to consider the conditions of that great mother of nations, the United Kingdom, the parent and central figure of the British Empire group. Oversea, we have under different conditions, but with the same vitality and national feeling, the dominions of Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa—countries huge in extent, self-governing in polity, and one in sentiment.

For building up the scattered parts of our vast empire into one great and cohesive whole, we must act somewhat as an architect does who rears up a mighty structure. He would provide firm foundations, strong walls, protecting roof—shelter, comfort, safety. It would be his care to have materials that were good, durable, fast bound together. So must it be with the building of an empire; its foundations must be based on justice, and it must be bound together by common interests. Unless the structure be strongly bound together, it cannot stand; unless the empire be united by common interests and based upon just principles, sooner or later it must fall. Thus the federation of the United States of America bound that nation together for more than eighty years. But then a struggle of life and death divided that great confederacy and threatened its disruption, until the war ended with the abolition of slavery.

Let us here pause to review our Australian conditions.

Without expecting that the population of Australia should be three or four hundred to one square mile, as in the United Kingdom, we must yet allow that the Australian proportion of five persons to four square miles is too small for either due progress or national safety. As I mentioned in a former paper, Australia is of such vast extent—a little less than the whole of Europe—though possessing only about four and

a quarter millions of inhabitants, the population of Holland, one of the smallest of the European kingdoms, and the area of Holland is less than half of that of Tasmania. Australia, lying far removed from the scene of the world's greatest activities, still has the aegis of the British Empire cast over it. At present, as far as we know, it has no hostile neighbour; but possible international complications may at any time arise; and we must remember that we have at our gates in Samoa and New Guinea outposts of the great and powerful German Empire; while northward, at a distance of only a few days' steaming, lie the great Empires of China and Japan. Australia's greatest weakness is her meagre population for so vast a territory. Large tracts are wholly waste and uninhabited; while Western Australia is remote and cut off from the other States of the Commonwealth, not even being joined by the connecting link of a railway.

All praise is due to Sir John Forrest, whose statesmanlike foresight has seen the importance of this work. A superficial glance might view it as a mere railway joining Western Australia to South Australia, while the statesman will see in it a strong bond linking that distant land more closely to the other States. He would further see these benefits: the quickening of our oversea mails; the immense strengthening given to our system of defence; and, more important still, he would recognise a way opened up for settlement all along the line, besides a hugely augmented means of attracting that immigration which we so greatly need for our national development.

The urgency and need in the construction of railways joining together the whole of the Commonwealth, and the opening up of lands for settlers, call aloud for immediate action; and yet with such demands on the purse of the Commonwealth, coupled with the cost of defence, we hear no protests against the intentions so loudly and vauntingly expressed of building a new Capital in the Bush. Have we not magnificent cities enough already built without going to the enormous outlay involved in building a new one? Have we the money to spare when so much is needed for the development of the Commonwealth? I for one have the courage to denounce such a needless and extravagant expenditure. We want no child's toys, when so many serious matters demand our attention. It seems to me, the immediate construction of railways and the urgency of immigration are our most pressing needs, and a fit preparation for the accomplishment of Imperial Federation.

In striving to rear up the magnificent structure of Imperial Federation, we must consider Australian conditions. We must also consider those who will have to carry out the noble and inspiring work we have commenced; and to the rising generation our thoughts are at once turned.

We must see that the influence of the home life, the example we set our children, and the wholesome discipline of a well regulated household should be the greatest factors in preparing them to fill worthily any position it may be their lot to occupy. If we want our country to be great and progressive, we must train highly our younger citizens in arts and industries, so that our agriculturalists may win ripe harvests of the fruits of the earth, and our miners unlock from the hidden lode abundance of its treasures; and that our craftsmen by their skill and industry may widely benefit mankind. This knowledge and these results we hope to get through the widening influences of our national education, strengthened by its technical and continuation schools; but if we desire to train up a sturdy, self-reliant, God-fearing people, the home influence must be supreme: this is the root of the whole matter.

In replying the other day to the addresses of loyalty from the Convocations of Canterbury and York, His Majesty the King sent this message:—"The ends we pursue are in harmony with the Church's teachings, and can only be achieved while we seek in faith and humility that perfect standard of conduct and sacrifice which have been revealed to Christian men." The foundation of national glory is set in the homes of the people, and will remain unshaken only while the family life of the race and nation is strong, simple and pure. Amid the complexities of modern social conditions, the Church's religious and charitable work assumes a deeper practical significance.

The Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department, Mr. C. F. G. Masterman, in addressing the Conference in London of the Parents' National Education Union, remarked that if children, besides being taught their duty to their neighbours, were taught to answer the question, "Who is my neighbour?" it would be possible to break the barriers dividing the various classes of society. The key to the problem, he declared, lay in religious education.

If our youth are brought up to fear God and honour the King from their earliest infancy, there is little doubt of their success in after life, the precepts then instilled into their minds must bear abundant fruit and carry with

them the greatest blessings. Our one aim, our one desire, should be that our sons may make yet better men than their fathers, and worthy in the truest sense of the word for building up our mighty Empire.

We must never forget that a nation is great or small in proportion to the character of its people. Ancient Greece, one of the smallest of nations, shines out in history as one of the greatest.

Our late King Edward, in the many phases of his character, sets us all an example in the simplicity of his home life, and the manner in which he fulfilled the duties of a private English gentleman in his beautiful home at Sandringham. No more pathetic tribute was paid to his memory than the words used by one of his tenants, when the sad news of his death reached his Norfolk home: "The country has lost a King, but the people of Sandringham have lost a father." The first message of King George was sent to Sandringham. After speaking of the irreparable loss which had been suffered by all, the telegram proceeded:—"My beloved father dearly loved his country home, and was ever mindful of the interests and well-being of one and all there. My feelings towards all will always be the same as his." King Edward was no respecter of persons; he gave to all who were doing their duty the same grateful recognition, irrespective of rank or condition. He acknowledged the fact that the man who was conscientiously doing his duty could hold his own with the highest noble in the land; and he dispensed the hospitalities of Sandringham to all alike.

We in our humbler way would do well to imitate the bright example our late King has set us. Social shams rank among the greatest vulgarities of our time. We should never lose sight of the truth—

"Honour and shame from no condition rise:
Act well your part, there all the honour lies."

and the same poet further tells us—

"A wit's a feather, and a chief a rod;
An honest man's the noblest work of God."

Instead of parading in the so-called society papers the splendour of our entertainments, the magnificence of our dress, the variety of our holidays, and other of our doings, thereby arousing the envy of others less favoured, we should do everything in our power to draw all classes together in

closer sympathy and mutual respect. In short, we should endeavour to lead the simple life. King George in his message speaks of this simple life—the home life, as the foundation of our national greatness.

In speaking of immigration as a means of growing faster into the adult stage of a nation's life, let us contrast our relative accession of population by birth and by immigration to a young country like Australia. Of course, we rightly welcome the addition of every healthy child born here under satisfactory surroundings; but the new life of an infant is a future rather than a present asset. Fourteen to twenty years may have to elapse before his value as a worker is in any degree apparent; while, on the other hand, the immigrant usually is far beyond the infant stage, very often has reached man's estate, and in him long years of nurture, training and education are saved; he does not, as a rule, arrive here moneyless; indeed, the aggregate sum so brought into Canada is reckoned as a sensible addition to the national capital; and so must it be here, less in amount, but only because the total immigration here is less than in Canada. For some years, Australia has stagnated with a population of some four millions; while Canada, a few years back, jumped up to five millions of people, and is now rated at about eight millions; while still the high tide of emigration to Canada, far from ebbing, flows onward with increased strength. Some time back there was a party in the community which looked askance at the immigrant. To their distorted view, he was simply a competitor for wages, a rival who might bring down wages, a denizen of a country where harsher conditions of life prevailed; and it was asserted that the Victorian standard of living would become lower, less comfortable and less wholesome in character. Now this is all mere midsummer madness—those who look into facts know how erroneous is that prejudice. First, the class of immigrants coming here are usually strong, healthy young people. If they were of the most abject class, they would not have the money to emigrate. More or less, they are picked people, in the flower of their age; and there are few who do not bring with them a little money. If the average so brought were no more than £10 a head, the advent of 100,000 such persons would mean accession to the nation's capital of a million sterling; but this is only a collateral advantage; the greatest benefit arises from getting workers who would help to develop our country, to promote trade; and as customers themselves, would, by the supply of their wants, afford employment to a large section of the community.

To be prepared for the day when the whole of the vast British Empire will be united under one flag, we must pass our time in preparation for the great change. We must not neglect any of the duties which we have to fulfil as citizens of this great Commonwealth. Every good citizen should as a solemn duty, exercise his right of vote at elections, and give not only his vote, but the widest support to honest and enlightened men. We must carefully consider the enormous outlay we shall be called upon to make for Defence and for the construction of Railways.

It is a great satisfaction to note that the patriotic and far-seeing views regarding defence entertained by Mr. Deakin, our late Prime Minister, have been adopted by the present Ministry. This means a great step forward—a costly, but a most necessary one, and, as must be apparent to us all, we have no money for useless expenditure. The sooner the idea of building a new Capital City is abandoned, the better it will be for us all. We want less of the glitter and more of the gold. We Victorians make no claim for Melbourne to be the Capital City; Why should it not be Sydney, the metropolis of the Mother State? Let us shun the wild and wasteful outlay of millions on the proposed Bush Capital.

That we are making steady progress in our work for Imperial Federation cannot be denied, and not the least noticeable is the rapid growth of the number of scholars who honour "Empire Day." The Earl of Meath, in giving recent statistics of the observance of this day (omitted this year in consequence of the King's death) remarks that had the usual ceremony taken place, it would have been celebrated by 19,942 schools, numbering 4,099,895 scholars. A step also has been taken regarding our navy by Captain Tickell, our Victorian Naval Commandant, having gone home to bring out the two destroyers, the Yarra and Paramatta, which have been recently launched. Another step forward was the Imperial Press Conference, held in London, in June last year, to which delegates from all parts of the British Empire were sent, and in the interchange of thought among so distinguished a body of men, the cause of Imperial Federation must have greatly advanced. In that now historic gathering, in which the Australian representatives of the Press played so prominent a part, it is a matter of great congratulation to us that the late Sir Robert Kyffin Thomas, an Australian journalist, was appointed Chairman of the Oversea Delegates, and President of all the delegations of the Conference. For his great services, the honour of knighthood was conferred upon him as recently as February

last. His death has been greatly deplored by his brother pressmen. In Australasia, we are proud of our Press, for it challenges favourable comparison with the journalism of the great countries of the world. The Press is a mighty power, and sheds upon us benefit and enlightenment. The thanks of our League are due to the Victorian Press for the generous and sympathetic assistance it has given to our objects by its reports of our proceedings, and its advocacy of our principles. Yet one more event tending to unite the British people—the death of Edward the Peacemaker, our honoured and lamented King, has caused a thrill of sorrow throughout the Empire, and drawn all classes together in sympathy and union.

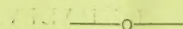
Let us sum up what we most earnestly desire. Simpler lives, more culture, deeper earnestness, increased industrial skill. So shall we fit ourselves for the high privilege of effective Federation. Let us fill up the gaps in our thinly manned coasts. I again say, "How?" First, by bringing hither a large picked supply of people, who shall become a great asset of power; for they shall strengthen and augment our workers, producers, thinkers, defenders—men and women who shall be worthy lives and true workers, helping us to raise Australia to her high destiny and to an honoured position in the coming federation of the great British Empire.



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OF AUSTRALIA.



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